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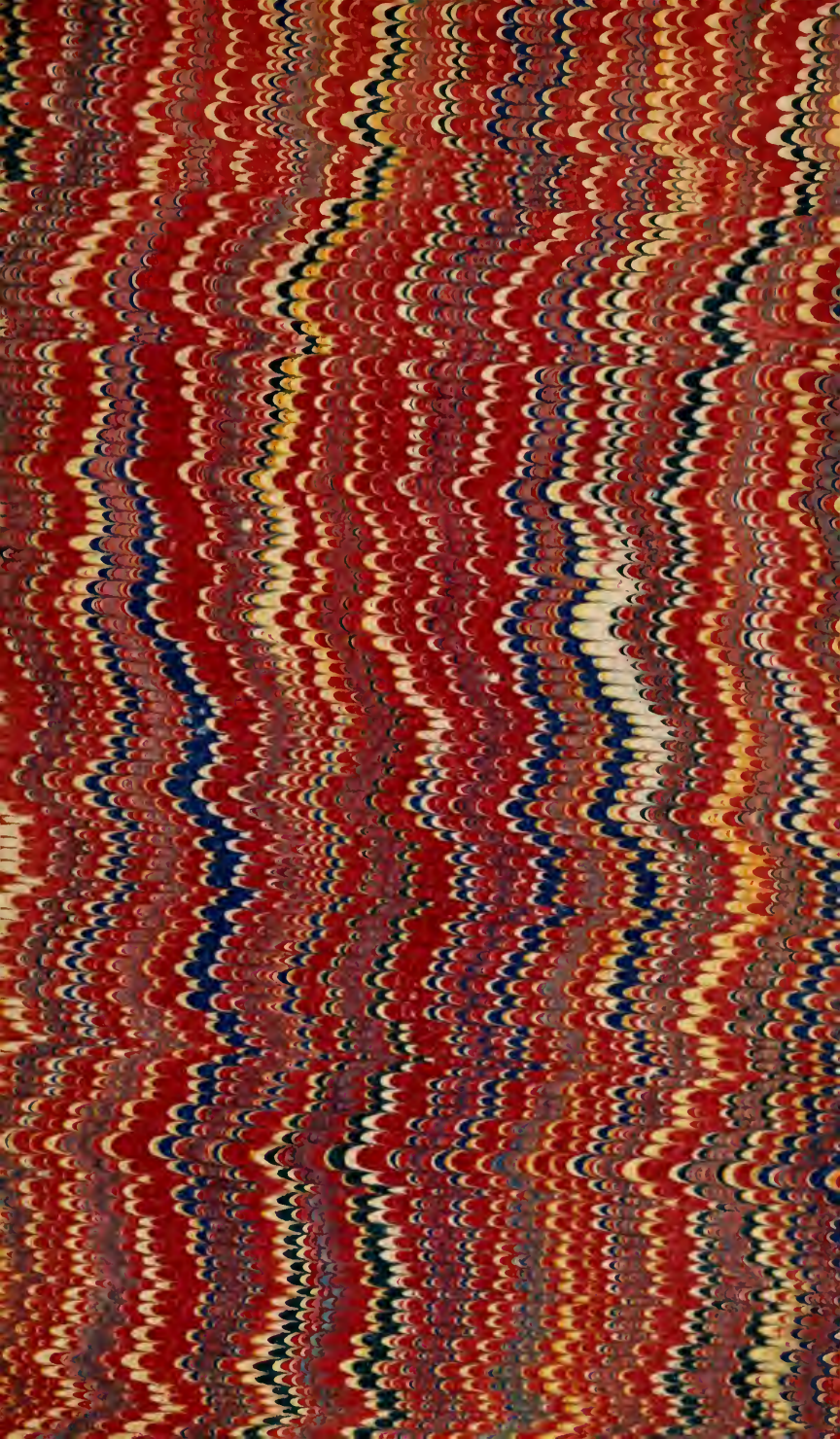


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





A
BRIEF SKETCH

OF

THE SERVICES

OF

JOHN G. WATMOUGH

DURING AND SUBSEQUENT TO

The Campaign of 1814 and 1815,

WHEN AN OFFICER IN THE

UNITED STATES ARMY.

PUBLISHED BY A COMMITTEE OF HIS FRIENDS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE.

1835.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE undersigned, a committee of the friends of John G. Watmough, present the accompanying sketch of his life and services to their fellow-citizens, in the hope and confident expectation that it will be attentively read and considered by them all. It is an imperfect memorial of gallant conduct and heroic endurance—a brief record of public service, such as few have rendered, and none excelled. The committee trust that it will be the means of refreshing the memory of the military and civil service of their candidate, and of stimulating to exertion all who wish to reward, by elevation to an honourable office in the gift of the people, a man who has suffered much, and bled freely in their cause. If this is realized, all their ends will be attained.

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A BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE SERVICES OF
Col. John G. Watmough.

JOHN G. WATMOUGH is a native of Philadelphia: at an early age, he exhibited the most enthusiastic devotion to liberty.

Before he had attained his eighteenth year, the second war of our Independence had commenced; the conquest of the *Guerriere* had already excited the wildest enthusiasm in every breast; it fired the imagination of our youthful fellow-townsmen, and he resolved at once to devote his life to the sacred cause of his country.

He therefore left his home, abandoned the pleasures and comforts of domestic life, and hastened to the field.

He had early applied to the venerable Madison for a commission in the regular army; and in the meanwhile, that no occasion of honour or usefulness might be lost, he joined a detachment of volunteers then raising for the defence of the Delaware, and with them performed a tour of duty in camp, under the command of the late Colonel Rush.

At the end of three months, this fine battalion received orders to return home, the government having at that time no further occasion for its services, and young Watmough received a commission as a lieutenant in the second regiment, United States Artillery.

He was immediately attached to a company commanded by Captain Alexander J. Williams.

The first wish of his heart was now gratified, and he prepared accordingly to join the American Army on the northern Frontier.

The prospects of the country were gloomy; our gallant armies had been beaten back; our strongest frontier post, Niagara, had been wrested from us; and our generals were retreating from Canada, and preparing to defend our own soil from invasion.

It was at this moment of doubt and terror, that the heroic Watmough determined to share the dangers and privations of his gallant countrymen.

The company to which lieutenant Watmough was attached, received orders to march express for the Niagara frontier; and, with a view to rapidity of movement, and immediate co-operation with the troops already on that frontier, they were conveyed in open sleds, and amid all the severity of a northern winter, to the intended scene of action.— Their object was to recover the strong hold which had been basely given up, and thus redeem the tarnished honor of the country.

The severity of such a journey, to a young frame, nurtured in all the comforts of a city life, may be imagined; but by the patriotic ardour of Watmough, they were met with cheerfulness.

He expected to suffer; and while he suffered for his country, he was content.

Early in the spring of 1814, the campaign opened. It opened amid surrounding gloom: but the patriot army knew that the safety, the liberty of their country, depended on them, and they determined to check the advance of the insolent foe or perish in the attempt.

How they performed that determination every American knows.—The heart of every citizen has glowed over the bloody and desperate struggle of that glorious but most sanguinary campaign.

The Star-Spangled Banner floated in the face of a foe superior in force, and *floated victoriously*. The history of the world cannot produce a series of battles exhibiting more determined courage and patriotism than those of the Niagara frontier.

Such were the scenes in which the patriotism of young Watmough was tried.

The bloody and hard fought battles of Chippewa and Bridgewater had been fought and won.

Brilliant as were these triumphs, they were not sufficient in themselves, to ward off from the army the difficulties that sprung from the want of co-operation on the part of the fleet.

The honour of the country had been fully redeemed, but at an immense sacrifice of life. The triumphs of the army had been most brilliant; and whenever, or wherever, the enemy had been met, they had been conquered. The army demanded that its losses should be repaired.

It was in vain that these brave men, who had so faithfully performed their duty, looked to the government for the means to enable them to plant their victorious eagles upon the ramparts of Quebec.

These means were not furnished; no reinforcements arrived; and the heroes, to whom victory had become familiar, were compelled, once more, to fall back upon their original lines.

The feeling of indignant honour may be appreciated from the following fact:—

When the order to retreat was promulgated amid the trophies that had been raised upon the field of Bridgewater, it was received with a general burst of indignation and shame;—the veteran was seen to dash the tear from his eye.

Not a countenance but plainly, said “let us die here, with our arms in our hands, upon the field of our fame, but let us never give an inch.”

The spirit of discipline soon however prevailed, and when the columns of march were formed, by an almost unanimous impulse, every soldier turned his cap-plate to the rear, nearly all of which had been perforated by a bullet, that the enemy might understand the feeling that animated him.

Fort Erie now became the scene of the war. It was here that the last stand was to be made; if successfully made, the country was safe;

if not, the road to the triumphant British was open, and the bosom of our country would have been desolated with the cruelties of invading conquerors and foes.

Such was the crisis; and, among those who won the praise and gratitude of their country, by their heroism on that occasion, no individual merits a higher or more enduring wreath of glory than young Watmough.

During this eventful period, the second regiment of artillery was constantly engaged. For several weeks, not a day elapsed that it did not meet the enemy. The whole period was one protracted battle; always nobly fought, and as often triumphantly won.

On the 2d of August, 1814, after having most cautiously felt its way, the British army at length appeared in full force, before the walls of Fort Erie.

About two o'clock on that day, a general demonstration was made on the American lines. After a sharp contest, it was gallantly repulsed at all points.

The British General saw at once that the confidence of the American army was still undiminished.

He determined, therefore, to effect that by siege, which he found it was impossible to do by escalade.

In the course of the night his batteries were planted, and on the following day he opened his fire.

The cannonade and bombardment on both sides, continued for upwards of fifty days, with little or no intermission, and with fatal effect.

During this cannonade, Lieutenant Watmough, with his gallant comrades, the lamented Williams and M'Donough, were stationed on the advance battery, *nearest the foe*, and on the evening of the 13th, we find him by the official report, wounded by a piece of shell; notwithstanding which, impelled by a patriotism which never considered its duty fulfilled while a spark of life remained, he left the hospital where he was confined, and arose to perform his part in the brilliant battle of the next day, in the course of which he received those wounds which disable him to the present hour.

The night of the 15th of August was fixed by the British for their final attack. It was dark and rainy, and every way calculated to promote the success of the assailants. The cannonade which had commenced at daylight the morning previous, had not ceased until one o'clock of the morning of the 15th. The American troops had been under arms during the whole night.

At half-past two o'clock, to use the emphatic language of the commanding officer, in his official letter to the War Department, "the enemy advanced, enveloped in darkness as black as their own designs."

The attack was made at various points, by three heavy columns of choice troops, led by the most distinguished officers, and sustained by a heavy reserve, and a body of seven or eight hundred Indians.

By one of those singular accidents which often happen in war, and which too often decide the fate of battles and of empires, the British co-

lums of the left had nearly succeeded in traversing the plain in front of the American advance batteries unobserved.

The British attack was first made upon the American left by the German regiment of De Watteville, fifteen hundred strong, under the command of their distinguished Colonel Fischer.

They were received by a tremendous fire of artillery and small arms, and, although they persevered with the obstinacy of madmen, were finally repulsed with an immense loss of killed, wounded, and prisoners. Their brave commander was carried from the field mortally wounded.

To the distinguished valor and skill of Colonels Wood and Towson, this result was mainly attributable. In the meanwhile the attacking columns of the left were held back.

The American officer who commanded the picket guards in their front was young and entirely inexperienced—he had joined the army but a day or two before, and knew nothing of war.

His orders were to hold on firmly until the attack commenced, and then retreat slowly within our lines. He entirely mistook their object, and upon the report of the first gun from the American left, he commenced his own retreat without waiting to be attacked, and in spite of the entreaties of his brave veterans. The error sprang from ignorance, not from want of patriotism or courage; it had, however, nearly proved fatal to the American army.

The officers of artillery stationed in the advance battery nearest the foe, were at their posts, and keenly on the alert.

The heroic Williams and M'Donough were congratulating themselves and their young comrade, Watmough, at the near prospect of honour and promotion, when suddenly, without the previous notice of a single shot, the trampling of feet, and the sound of voices were heard nearly under the muzzles of their guns.

The brave M'Donough was the first to leap upon the parapet and demand, in a voice of thunder, "Who goes there?" The watch-word was instantly returned, and the officer of the American picket attempted to excuse his conduct. M'Donough replied, "Return, sir, instantly, and die upon your post—one moment's delay, and I'll blow you and your command into ten thousand atoms." The young man obeyed, but scarcely had he advanced two hundred yards before he encountered the heads of the advancing columns of the enemy.

Instantly from front to rear, the British officers were heard encouraging their soldiers, and ordering them "TO GIVE THE DAMNED YANKEE RASCALS NO QUARTER." Our gallant band received them with a tremendous fire of artillery and musquetry, and the British were repulsed at every point. The unremitting and destructive fire of our brave artilleryists produced a scene of the most appalling grandeur. Every avenue of sense conveyed some idea of horror.

The thick gloom of the night, only broken by the glare of the lighting and the bright flashing of the guns—the alternate roar of the cannonade and the death-like stillness of those solemn intervals of silence, which interrupt the tumult of war—the lurid smoke which hung like a

mournful curtain over the field of carnage—the shrieks of the wounded and dying, and the yells of the hostile Indians—all combined to produce a spectacle of sublime reality.

They returned five times to the attack, determined to conquer or perish in the attempt. The sixth assault was attended with better success. Colonel Drummond, who attacked Watmough's battery with a column of one thousand men, effected a footing on the bastion, and charged the defenders, while in the very act of re-loading their guns. The Colonel himself led the forlorn hope which was composed of a detachment of seamen and marines, belonging to a brig of war, which a few days previous had been run ashore near Fort George, and burnt by our fleet.

A personal conflict of great violence ensued and continued for some time, with alternate success.

In a desperate resolve to repel the foe, the brave, the intrepid Williams and M'Donough both fell—the former mortally wounded by a ball through the body; the latter, instantly killed by a shot through the head.

The incident related above sufficiently indicates the character of M'Donough; that of Captain Williams will be appreciated and better understood from the following authentic fact:—

On the day previous to the battle in which he received his death, the cannonade and bombardment had been unusually severe; throughout the whole of it he had kept up an unceasing and most destructive fire upon the enemy from the long eighteen pound gun on the block-house, of which, subsequently, after his death, and during the assault, his friend and associate, Watmough, made such effective use. From its elevated position, every movement at this gun was distinctly visible to the enemy.

After repeated efforts, they at length succeeded in throwing upon the platform a thirteen inch bomb; it passed within a few inches of the heroic Williams, descended in the midst of his men, and perforating the platform, lodged itself beneath, amid the caissons which held the ammunition necessary for the battery. The first impulse of the men was that of escape from the sentence of immediate death that threatened them all. Every one knew that the instant the bomb exploded would be the last moment he had to live. The eyes of the whole army were directed to the spot; an awful stillness ensued; the men turned a supplicating look upon their brave commander; his lofty person expanded with a dignity almost sublime, and raising his sword aloft, with a calm, firm voice he exclaimed, "*My brave lads, stand to your posts to the last, and let no man tarnish the honour of his country—he that moves I will instantly strike dead!*" Judge then of the feelings of universal joy that ensued, when, after a few moments of awful delay, it was announced that the fire had gone out before it had penetrated the bomb. On examination it was found that in passing through the triple oak platform of the battery, the fuse had been providentially cut off even with the external surface of the bomb before the fire had reached the same point.

Williams, M'Donough, and Watmough, were all natives of Philadelphia, and certainly our city has reason to be proud of her sons.

The mother of M'Donough, a venerable and most respectable lady, still lives among us to deplore his fate. Let her be comforted—he died like a patriot and a soldier, upon the field of honour.

Young Watmough, upon whom the command now devolved, again rallied his men,—determined to defend his guns, or perish in the attempt: his brothers in arms lay dead and dying at his feet; the enemy kept pouring in their masses upon him; but, although weakened by the loss of blood, and by long continued exertion, he still maintained his ground; at length, overpowered by numbers, and having been again wounded, he was driven with his few remaining comrades to the edge of the parapet, and while there, encouraging his men to hold firm until assistance should arrive, was struck with the butt end of a musket, and thrown, by the violence of the blow into the ditch.

Here he lay for a few minutes, surrounded by the killed and wounded of the enemy, and exposed to the fire of the other batteries; at length, recovering, he collected strength sufficient to regain the entrance to the fort.

He found the bastion in full possession of the enemy; and an eighteen pound gun, on a neighbouring block-house, from which a fatal fire might be maintained on the conquered battery, entirely deserted. With the assistance of a brave corporal of artillery, named Farquhar, Lieutenant Watmough loaded and pointed the abandoned gun. He succeeded in discharging it several times with terrible effect.

The attention of the enemy was instantly recalled to this point of extreme danger.

They saw at once that it rendered the position which it had cost them so much blood to gain, untenable; their whole force was immediately directed against it; volley after volley was now discharged at the spot, from which Lieutenant Watmough continued with unabated ardour, and with terrible effect, to direct his fire.

For a long time he escaped unhurt; at length, while in the act of loading the piece to the muzzle, for the sixth or seventh time, a musket ball struck him in the breast, and he fell; at the same moment, the bastion, of which the enemy had gained temporary possession, blew up—and with it went all their hopes of victory.—As our youthful soldier lay upon the field, supposed to be mortally wounded, he was soon after cheered by the news that the enemy had been repulsed at all points.

Such were some of the incidents of the attack on Fort Erie—a battle as gallantly contested, and, on our part, as nobly won, as any in our annals.—The American force in this battle was only about eighteen hundred and thirty-four men fit for duty; while the British numbered upwards of five thousand. The loss on the American side was inconsiderable, and almost exclusively confined to the corps of the gallant Watmough, which was wholly sacrificed; on the side of the British, the loss in killed, wounded and prisoners, was enormous.

To the intrepidity and desperate perseverance of the heroic Watmough, the glorious result of this battle was in great part ascribed. The subjoined letter of General Gaines, will show his enthusiastic admiration of the patriotic heroism of Watmough.

Perhaps the annals of war would be vainly searched for an instance of heroism and devotion to country, equal to that of Col. Watmough in this encounter. Confined to his couch by wounds, received in former battles, at the approach of danger he hastens to his post. He is foremost in the contest. His companions are killed or driven back, yet he stands alone and unflinching, until he is hurled down, wounded and bleeding, into the ditch of the Fort. Here, surrounded by the dying, and drenched in his own blood, and that of his enemies, he, after a time, recovers. But with the tide of returning life, returns a principle dearer to him than life—love of his country. He disengages himself from the mangled mass and returns to the fight. He finds an abandoned battery, and summons sufficient strength to load and fire the cannon; until, after repeated volleys are directed against him, and repeated rounds are given, he falls. His friends, encouraged by this timely diversion, rally, renew the fight and conquer. But where is the hero of the day! Where is the gallant Watmough? They drag him from among the dead, bloody, mangled, and almost lifeless.

While lying in the hospital near Buffalo, and at that time unable to rise from his bed, the news of the disasters at Washington reached Lieutenant Watmough, with an exaggerated account of the capture of Baltimore, and the probable march of the British on his native city. It was no time to wait to be cured. Permission was obtained to return to Philadelphia. A common one-horse wagon was hired—the bed, with its wounded occupant, was placed in it—and the painful journey home was with difficulty accomplished.

On his arrival, he was not prevented by the severity of his wounds and continued debility, from reporting himself for duty.

He was immediately attached to the staff of his old commander, General Gaines, who, on the first advance of the British army on the road, had been ordered thither to assume the command.

In spite of the orders of his Physician, the late Dr. Wistar, and the earnest entreaties of his friends, Lieutenant Watmough determined to accompany that gallant officer on his journey to the south, whither he had been ordered, and set out, in the middle of a most inclement winter, to cross the mountains, and descend the river to New Orleans.

The ice in the Ohio prevented their progress by water, and the impediments in land travelling being numerous, young Watmough was delayed too long on the route to contribute his aid in the achievement of the glorious victory of the 8th of January. A severer disappointment to so chivalric a spirit cannot be conceived. On the field of New Orleans, he might have added new laurels to the wreath already blooming on his brow, and performed a useful part in the glorious scene which terminated the second war of our Independence.

On the first reduction of the army, in 1815, Lieutenant Watmough

was retained, and having received the Brevet promotion to which his gallant services and severe sufferings entitled him, he was offered by his friend and commander, General Gaines, an unlimited furlough, to enable him to heal his wounds, and recover from their painful and harassing effects.

The same letter, however, which conveyed this offer, spoke of "a speck of war, which had just arisen on our southern border, among the Creek and Seminole Indians."

As may well be supposed, the wounds and the furlough were instantly forgotten, and our youthful hero, regardless of himself, and only alive to the call of honour and his country, once more set out to encounter the toils and dangers of a wilderness campaign.

From New Orleans, he repaired to Augusta, in Georgia, at which point the troops were ordered to concentrate.

From Augusta, he was sent by his General to the city of Charleston, with orders to expedite immediately the march of the gallant 4th regiment, U. S. Infantry, for the Indian country, and to equip a brigade of light artillery, with all speed, suitable for an Indian war.

To a soldier, the arduousness of this duty will be apparent, when it is remembered that the guns were not only to be mounted, but the horses to be bought and broken in, the harness made and fitted, a full supply of ammunition, to be prepared and fixed, and even the men instructed in the ordinary duties of managing their horses, as well as in the more important ones, incidental to the effective service, to which they were now for the first time called.

How promptly all this was accomplished, will be at once seen, when the reader is informed, that on the same day that the 4th regiment encamped for the night, at Augusta, having proceeded thus far on its route to the Indian nation, a regular battery of field pieces, completely equipped for immediate service, reached the same point.

Several toilsome subsequent months were spent in the wilderness. The prompt and efficient measures, however, adopted by the gallant Gaines, had entirely checked the warlike spirit of the Indians. They did not venture to take the field; and the troops were placed in cantonment on their frontier.

In the winter of 1816, all prospect of active service having terminated, and feeling an unconquerable reluctance to pass a life of even comparative inactivity, Lieutenant Watmough resigned his commission and returned to the paths of private life.

From that period Colonel Watmough has resided amongst us, and been engaged in the manly occupation of an independent FARMER, earning an honest subsistence by the sweat of his brow, and dispensing his unpretending hospitality to his neighbours and friends. In all the relations of life he has exhibited the spirit of a democrat, the honour of a soldier, the purity of a patriot. He has kept the even tenor of his way, loved by all who knew him, and known by all as the poor man's friend, and the country's champion.

The wounds received by him in the war remain unhealed. The

best medical advice has been procured; but he has suffered too much to hope for a recovery. During the last winter and Spring, the pain and anguish produced by them, have increased almost beyond endurance.— Fortunately he has, in a measure, been relieved by surgical aid. Within the last month a musket bullet has been extracted from his left breast.

Thus, after the actual dangers of battle have terminated, has this gallant soldier suffered for a period of twenty-one years, and borne on his person a rankling wound, received in the hour of peril, and endured through years of suffering with fortitude, that never murmured or repined.

In 1830, the people of the Third District, anxious to reward merit so conspicuous, and willing to trust the patriotism so well tried in the hour of his country's need, called upon him to represent them in Congress.— At their call he abandoned prospects of the most flattering character, and consented to serve. The contest was a warm one; but the people would not see the man who had fought and bled for them put down, and he was elected by a handsome majority.

In Congress, he still preserved the high reputation he had gained in the field. He exhibited the same high sense of honor, the same noble devotion to the welfare of the people, the same disinterested and enthusiastic patriotism. He dedicated himself day and night to the interests of his constituents; he was not found sacrificing their honour to any scheme of personal aggrandizement, nor selling their rights for the promise of office. With him, all was open and manly republicanism, straight forward and patriotic; and every honest man, both in Congress and out of it, looked upon John G. Watmough with confidence and respect.

His speeches were what he is himself; able, exalted, fervent, and patriotic. Always ready, always fluent, always forcible and eloquent, he contended upon the floor of Congress, with the same noble spirit which bore him up in the day of battle.

The cause of his constituents had an intrepid and eloquent champion while he was in the house; and more was effected for the district, and, by his means, for the country, during the brief period that he was in Congress, than the most sanguine of his friends could have hoped or expected.

His attention, however, was not solely confined to those great public measures, which have so deeply engrossed all minds. It is true, his exertions to sustain them have gained him a fair and honourable fame.

We find him not less warmly and with characteristic generosity advocating the cause and relieving the necessities of the veteran soldier of '76, whom years, and infirmities, and hope "long deferred," had reduced almost to despair.

By him, too, has the tear been wiped from the orphan's eye, and the sorrows which weighed down the heart of the disconsolate widow, alleviated and dispelled.

He restored to the Naval Pension Fund, the large defalcation occasioned by the failure of the bank of Columbia, in 1823, with interest,

from the day it took place, and thus enabled the fund to meet all the obligations which the country owed to the widows and orphans of the brave seamen, who had perished in the performance of their duty, whether by casualty, by battle, or by disease.

This defalcation, with the interest that had accrued, amounted to nearly one hundred and seventy thousand dollars.

The same Bill that restored this large amount, placed on the naval pension roll all the widows of the officers, seamen, and marines, who have died as above specified, in the cause of their country.

After having thus performed his duties, it is not strange that his constituents insisted upon his again serving them. Always prepared to obey the people, whether their commands direct him to enrich the shore of Lake Erie with his blood, or to contend for their rights on the floor of Congress, he consented to serve. The people again rallied around the hero of Erie; and in return for his blood shed for them, gave him their hearty support. He was re-elected in 1832, by an increased and immense majority.

To the painful recollections of the political contest of 1834, we have no wish to recur. That contest was marked by incidents such as probably will never be renewed, and exhibited a combination of circumstances and political forces, against which it was in vain to struggle.—One thing, however, deserves to be noticed, as pregnant with emphatic praise of Colonel Watmough.

Embittered as that conflict was—morbidly excited as were the minds and tempers of the partizans that were arrayed against him, no word of personal disparagement was uttered, and when the battle was fought and won, his victorious opponents willingly united in expressions of regard and respect for their generous and patriotic adversary.

We think this may be said with perfect truth.

The character of John G. Watmough is portrayed in his acts. He points the people not to expressions of attachment, not to promises of service—but to actions—noble, chivalrous, patriotic actions. He is the devoted lover of liberty and the people. For them he lives, for them he has proven that he would be willing to die. As a soldier, he is the bravest of the brave. As a politician, he is an undeviating democrat.

As a representative, his only object has been to promote and secure the happiness and welfare of his constituents. As a speaker, he is easy, forcible, convincing and eloquent.

We may safely affirm that Pennsylvania has never sent to Congress, a representative more generally beloved and respected, more patriotic and devoted, than Colonel John G. Watmough.

GENERAL GAINES.

The following letter from the gallant General Gaines, who commanded on the frontier during Colonel Watmough's term of service, will afford a glowing, but not overcharged picture of his character :—

NASHVILLE, (Tennessee,) September 10, 1830.

SIR—I have received your letter of the 5th of last month, via St. Louis.

I should deem myself to be unworthy of the many valued tokens of applause and respect bestowed on me by my beloved country, for the victory to which you allude, were I to refuse the testimony of my approbation to any of my faithful companions in arms, who bravely assisted, as Watmough did, in the achievement of that victory. No man of his age, has ever given me stronger proofs of exemplary patriotism, vigilance in preparation, or gallantry in action, than John G. Watmough. Nor have I ever known a man whose intrepidity or perseverance in battle, under previous severe wounds, was more praiseworthy; nor one whose fall was more bloody or honourable, nor whose restoration from apparent death was so signally providential.

While a lieutenant of artillery, and scarcely arrived at the age of manhood, when first known to me, he was distinguished for the purity of his moral sentiments, the vigour of his military mind, and the untiring assiduity of his attention to his professional duties—often amidst privations and exposures incident to the active operations of a crippled and recently retreating army, of very inferior numbers, in the country of a powerful enemy, suffering under frequent severe cannonades and skirmishing, which for some days preceded the principal battle of Fort Erie, In one of these conflicts, a day or two before the battle, he received a wound in his breast and through one of his arms. Thus crippled, he was urged to confine himself to his tent. But when, on the night of the 4th August, hearing that I expected an attack before morning, his martial spirit, moved by the animating note of silent but energetic preparation for battle, prompted him to disregard his wounds and repair to his post—which in a few hours proved to be emphatically *the post of honour*—for it was the post of greatest danger. Here he exerted his efforts, with his gallant captain and company, until near the close of the battle; and until assured by the cheering and often reiterated shouts of his companions in arms, along the whole line from left to right, that victory was about to declare in our favour, the enemy's right and left columns having been repulsed.

It was yet too dark to see the enemy beyond the reach of an esplanade, excepting only by the momentary light of our cannon and small arms, which afforded us a faint glimpse of his moving masses when he rallied two of his crippled columns. This force, led on by Colonel Drummond, one of the bravest of men, mounted the half bastion, in the defence of which the heroic Williams, M'Donough, and Watmough,

with most of their brave Pennsylvania soldiers fell. The two former, with several of the latter, were killed or mortally wounded.

Being near the place, and apprised of the disaster by the enemy's joyous shouts, as well as by the report of a crippled soldier retiring from the spot, I took immediate measures, with the aid of our intrepid M'Kree, Aspinwall, Jones, and Harris, and Foster, and Bolton, and others, to bring up the remnant of my reserve, and in the meantime to direct the fire of all the troops on the right and left, and near enough for an effective fire, to bear upon the enemy upon the half bastion, and in front of it, where he had just appeared in very considerable force.— This was the only point about my encampment where I had any works of defence, other than very ordinary breast-works, in many places not more than two and a half or three feet high, with here and there a little parcel of loose brush, irregularly thrown down with a view to construct *abatis*. With the half bastion, the enemy had obtained three pieces of cannon, but which he could not bring to bear upon any vital part of my position. He thus found himself in the possession of three useless cannon, in a small, open half bastion, where he could not hope to remain an hour, and from whence he could not possibly advance without inevitable destruction, nor retreat without apparent disgrace. Thus exposed to a galling fire, without the means of doing me any material injury, he remained until most of his officers and men on the half bastion, and many of those beyond it, were killed or wounded.

It was near 4 o'clock—and *day-light*, which of all things was then most desirable, was just beginning to dawn upon the contending forces—when Watmough, having partially recovered from the blow of a hand-spike, by which he had been knocked down in the assault on the half bastion, finding near it a six pounder that had been silenced by the fall of a part of its gunners, loaded and opened a fire upon the enemy then very near him. In this renewed effort he was soon cut off by a ball through his breast, from the last fire of the enemy's musquetry. About this time the platform of the half bastion was blown up, and the enemy's columns that had been drawn up before it were driven back and hastily retreated. The whole of his right wing had been forced to retreat more than half an hour previous to this explosion. I soon after found Watmough weltering in his blood, and though to all appearances mortally wounded, he still retained his senses and self-possession, notwithstanding it was evident that an ounce ball had passed through him, within an inch or two of his heart. He soon after gave me a detailed account of the occurrences of the assault on the half bastion, which corroborated the account given me by our beloved Williams, within the few hours in which he languished after the battle, and before his death, during the greater part of which time he also retained his senses.

Our excellent surgeons, Lovell, Mower, and others, under favour of the kind Providence that has sustained our young warrior in battle, soon restored him to his friends and his country's service. He served near two years as my aid-de-camp, during which time, though afflicted with severe pain from his wounds, he was indefatigable in the discharge

of his duty, and always exemplary in his department. He resigned, not long after the war, and has since devoted his attention to the honourable pursuits of agriculture, with a knowledge of law and literature sufficient to qualify him for the most elevated duties of civil life. I take great pleasure in the recollection, that, during near sixteen years in which we have been acquainted, and in the frequent interchange of official and unofficial views, I have no recollection of our having had occasion to differ in opinion with him on any military subject, nor even in any case more than once, and that happened to be in reference to an election; upon that occasion, such was my confidence in the purity of his principles, and the soundness of his judgment, that our difference of opinion tended rather to induce me to *await the test of time*, to determine which of us was right, than in a spirit of intolerance, (such as mark the character of ultra partizan politicians,) to condemn one of the most faithful of my country's defenders, for the free exercise of his judgment, which I had so long approved and admired. And it is due to him now that I should say, that the anticipated *test* has tended rather to confirm me in the high estimation in which I had held his judgment, than to afford me room for egotistical exultation.

With a knowledge of his talents, services and sufferings, of which the foregoing will give you a faithful outline, as far as my opportunity and time will permit, I cannot but feel much gratification to learn, that his fellow citizens of Pennsylvania have determined to do merited honour to one who, during the most trying periods of war, contributed so much "to fill the measure of his country's honour and glory."

With my regrets that the misdirection of your letter should have prevented my receiving it sooner, I offer you assurances of my respect, and best wishes for the success of your laudable efforts in behalf of modest merit.

EDMUND PENDLETON GAINES.

Philadelphia, August 5, 1835.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION—

The subjoined statement has been drawn up at the request of a member of your Committee, and is submitted for what it is worth, by one who has not as yet taken any part in the contest for the Sheriffalty, and who feels himself bound to abide by, and sustain the decision of, the delegates upon whom the task of selecting a candidate will properly devolve.

A few months since, Colonel Watmough called at my office, and after conversing for a short time upon the ordinary topics of the day, cursorily mentioned that he was suffering very severely under the effects of a wound in his breast, received at the assault on Fort Erie. He stated further, that he intended, the next day, to have an operation performed, inasmuch as a ball, which had been in his bosom from the period of the contest up to that time, had become perceptible to the eye, and palpable to the touch, and he was determined to have it out. I expressed an anxiety to see the wound; and, after considerable reluctance, the Colonel consented to satisfy my curiosity. He stepped into a chamber adjoining, threw off his coat, and tore the bandages from his breast. The spectacle presented was calculated to make the strongest impression upon the mind—both as to the services and the sufferings of the gallant officer. The left side of the breast was swollen in a dreadful manner, and the whole wound presented a shocking appearance. The ball was plainly perceptible; and, in order to convince myself fully upon the subject, I pressed it with my finger, and examined the wound with close attention for some time.

The circumstance is mentioned merely with the object of putting down the numerous slanders that have been circulated in relation to the services and sufferings of the individual in question. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of Colonel Watmough in other respects, it is at least certain that he served his country well and gallantly during the last war; that he was severely wounded in the battle of Fort Erie; and that, up to this hour, he bears upon his person the evidences of his patriotic conduct on that interesting and eventful occasion.

Very Respectfully,

ROBERT MORRIS.

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